

Work experience and Work placements for ESA Work-Related Activity Group

DWP Policy and Strategy Forum
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Work experience and placements: Key points 1

- Changes are currently under way in the Welfare Reform Bill to introduce work experience and work placements as an aspect of Work-Related Activity for ESA claimants.
- This change will only affect those claimants placed in the Work-Related Activity Group.
- People in the Support Group, carers and lone parents with a child under the age of 5 will not be asked to undertake work related activity.

Work experience and placements: Key points 2

- This is a supportive measure and claimants will only be asked to do this where it is suitable in their personal circumstances.
- The focus should be on new skills and gaining experience. It should increase both confidence and employability.
- Work experience and placements will be just one aspect of Work-Related Activity and will not replace training and skills development.

Work experience and placements: Key points 3

- The precise nature of such placements will depend on what is suitable and beneficial to the individual and on local opportunities available.
- Placements would normally be short-term and need not be full-time and must be appropriate in the individual's circumstances.

Safeguards

- Claimants are able to request that an adviser reconsider whether an activity is appropriate. There is also a complaints procedure in place.
- The provider payment model, with payment only for job outcomes and awards for sustained employment, will also incentivise providers to support claimants into work through appropriate Work-Related Activity.

Funding and Employment Rights

- The Equality Act 2010 will apply to claimants undertaking work experience or work placements and therefore host employers will be obliged to make reasonable adjustments.
- Access to Work is not available for Work-Related Activity but Jobcentre Plus can use the Flexible Support Fund to support claimants and Work Programme providers will also contribute to facilitate such placements.
- Both the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Occupiers Liability Act 1957 apply.

WCA and Provision of Service

- Work experience and work placements cannot be used to circumvent the Work Capability Assessment to determine whether a claimant has limited capability for work or not.
 - Claimants can also see specialist advisers such as Disability Employment Advisers and Work Psychologists, and Work Choice is available for the most severely disabled. Guidance has also been issued to advisers on dealing with ESA claimants and highlighting the need to sign-post them to health services available locally.
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Adviser Training and Provision

- Jobcentre Plus advisers go through an accredited learning programme, supported by coaches. There are also clear procedures and guidelines to follow, and advisers who deal with ESA tend to specialise in supporting this group.
- Advisers have also received information on the following: different health conditions, maintaining people's well-being while out of work, national and local support services.